

Cleveland Objection Issues Summary – Trails/Recreation

Objectors:

- **Brian Albright**, San Diego County Parks and Recreation
- **Gardner Grady**, San Diego Mountain Bike Association
- **Rob Hutsel**, San Diego River Park Foundation
- **Evan Sollberger**

Summary:

In general, the Objectors disagree with Cleveland National Forest's (CNF) decision to designate new Recommended Wilderness (RW) areas without Backcountry Non-Motorized (BCNM) corridors that would allow for planned/future long distance trail development especially in the Eagle Peak Preserve and Deadman Flat/Kessler Flat areas. The objectors indicate the desire for more mountain bike opportunities and flexibility in alignments.

Review Team Analysis:

The forest considered objectors comments and addressed the comments in the project record. The FSEIS analyzed issues raised by the objectors. In some cases minor points such as the existing use or potential use of trails for mountain biking was over stated and not supported by the project record. The following is the key finding from the analysis:

- Some Trans County Trail and San Diego River Trail potential alignments are retained with BCNM corridors through RW.

The FSEIS analyzed alternatives supporting BCNM designation requested by objectors. The selected alternative incorporated BCNM areas for routes that are suitable and have existing mountain bike use. The Cleveland NF Draft ROD for the SEIS LMP Amendment specifically addressed planned trails: "There are several conceptual trails, including the San Diego River Trail and the Trans County Trail, where some of the potential alignments cross through areas of the Cleveland National Forest that will now be zoned as RW. The RW zoning will restrict mountain bike use if the trails were to be designated in those areas. For the Eagle Peak complex of IRAs, I have decided that a contiguous area of RW zoning is necessary to preserve its integrity beyond the corridors of existing roads. Since I support these trails in concept, I ensured that suitable corridors remain available for their placement outside of RW zoning" (CNF Draft ROD, pg. 4). The LMP Amendment considered planned trails and connectivity through RW by establishing a 200' wide corridor that would allow for undeveloped and unplanned sections of the Sea to Sea trail and the San Diego River Trail to be connected along existing roads through the wilderness (FSEIS, pp. 254, 256-257; CNF Draft ROD, pg. 4).

As discussed above, the final SEIS and Draft Cleveland ROD adequately analyzed and addressed the issues raised relating to the Sea to Sea, San Diego River Trails and the California Hiking and Riding Trail. Very little planning to determine optimal trail alignment of the Trans County Trail/Sea to Sea Trail has been completed in these areas. These trails were described (FSEIS, pg.

8), included within Alternative 2/2a (FSEIS, pg.109), and evaluated (FSEIS, pp. 254, 256-257). The 200' wide road corridors that accommodate mountain biking routes (on roads) through RW are shown in FSEIS Appendix 1G, Map of Cleveland South (FSEIS Appendix 1G, pg. 3).

The California Hiking and Riding Trail traverses into the Caliente RW area where it shares the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCNST) (SEIS, pg. 254). The PCNST has been closed to mountain biking since 1988 by Regional Order 88-4, therefore mountain biking use is already prohibited and would not be changed as a result of RW designation.

The Non-profits commented regarding other existing mountain bike trails in the area to the SE of the Eagle Peak Preserve and including Deadman's Flat and Kessler Flat. The Non-profits stated the trails are existing, shown on "Forest Service Maps" and provide for excellent mountain bike opportunities (San Diego River Park Letter_9003, pg. 2-3). Forest staff indicated through email response that the trails are a series of old rancher roads that are not NF System trails, are not optimal for mountain bike use, and receive very low mountain bike use.

REMEDY(S) PROPOSED BY OBJECTORS

- "My formal comment letter, Letter #8550 specifically requested that mountain bike access be maintained for all planned long-distance trails."
- "If the Forest Service is willing to remove Eagle Peak Preserve from proposed Recommended Wilderness in Alternative 2, then I could support that Alternative."
- "We recommend application of the Backcountry non-motorized land use designation on the lands where these trails and alignments are located to ensure that mountain bikers are able to utilize these trails along with hikers and equestrians. The Backcountry non-motorized designation would also provide flexibility in siting regional multi-use trails for which general alignments are currently identified (i.e., Trans County Trail)."

INSTRUCTIONS BEING CONSIDERED

- No instructions are recommended at this time. The FSEIS and ROD addressed the concerns raised by the objectors.